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# grant's home

STATE MEMORIAL



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## GRANT IN GALENA

When Ulysses S. Grant and his family arrived in Galena by steamboat from St. Louis in the spring of 1860, the city had already begun its economic decline. Galena experienced boom town prosperity from the lead mines in the 1820's and became a hustling river port and ambitious mercantile center in the 1840's.

Grant hoped to reverse his economic misfortunes by moving to northwest Illinois. Galena was the site of a leather goods store owned by his father, Jesse R. Grant, and operated by his brothers, Simpson and Orvil. In this store, Grant was nominally a clerk and ". . . travelled through the Northwest considerably during the winter of 1860-1. (They) had customers in all the little towns in south-west Wisconsin, south-east Minnesota and north-east Iowa." Until he left Galena in the spring of 1861 to serve in the Civil War, Grant and his family rented a modest, brick house on the west side of the river.

On August 18, 1865, Galena greeted the return of its victorious general with a grand celebration. There was a jubilant procession, decorated arches, speeches and a holiday atmosphere. From a triumphal arch spanning Main Street, thirty-six young ladies dressed in white waved American flags and threw bouquets. During the ceremonies the citizens of Galena presented the furnished house on Bouthillier Street to the general.

That evening there were fireworks, "transparencies and brilliantly lighted windows." General Grant held a levee in the Custom House Hall (U.S. Post Office Building) followed by a reception ball at the DeSoto House.

General Grant and his family left for Washington, D.C. on September 12, 1865, where he continued his duties as commanding general of the Army. As most of his later trips, this visit was relatively short. The Grants returned to Galena in the fall of 1868 and remained throughout his successful campaign for the presidency.

During the next fifteen years the Grant family used their Galena home as a haven during the course of campaigns and long journeys. The general enjoyed these brief periods renewing old friendships in Galena and the surrounding area.





General Grant and his home, c. 1865. *Chicago Historical Society*

After two terms in office, ex-President Grant and his family embarked, in May 1877, on a trip around the world. The Grants were warmly received by dignitaries in all of the countries they visited. Returning to San Francisco in September, 1879, the Grants made a triumphant journey to Galena. Their arrival "home" on November 5 prompted a large civic reception and celebration. Leaving in December, the general and his family returned to Galena only for short visits in 1880. As far as present research can tell, U.S. Grant left for New York City in September, 1880, and never stayed in his Galena house again, even though he and his wife visited Galena for the last time in May, 1883.

Ulysses S. Grant finished writing his **Memoirs** a short time before his death on July 23, 1885, at Mt. McGregor, New York.



The restored Dining Room.



## THE HOME

This brick house in the "Italianate Bracketed" style of the period was constructed as a residence for Alexander J. Jackson of Galena in 1859-1860. It was designed by William Dennison, "Engineer and Architect."

Elements of the "Italianate Bracketed" style included in Grant's Home are: the well defined rectilinear blocks of the building, the projecting or overhanging eaves supported by brackets, the low pitched roof, the piazza or covered porch, and the balustraded balcony.

The original plans and specifications were available for guidance during restoration in 1955-57. At this time, the home was strengthened internally to handle the many visitors who tour it. The original specifications state that "The House (is) to be of brick, of 36 feet by 40 feet to be two storys (sic), each to be 11 feet clear stud. To be an addition on the back of 30 feet by 17 feet one story high, of 9 feet clear high (sic)."

In 1904, Frederick Dent Grant, the eldest son, deeded the house to the City of Galena as a memorial to his father. The house was presented to the State of Illinois in 1932 and later incorporated into the Department of Conservation's Division of Parks and Memorials.

## MARKET HOUSE NEARBY

Also in Galena is the Old Market House, built in the 1840's. The building, once a center for buying and selling farm produce, now houses historical and architectural exhibits.

The Market House was given to the State of Illinois in 1947 and in the 1950's was restored to its original condition.

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION . . .

Numerous State Parks and Memorials are within easy access of every part of the state. Lodges, cabins and dining rooms are important features of Illinois Beach, Starved Rock, Pere Marquette, White Pines Forest and Giant City. Reservations for lodging should be made with lodge managers.

All state parks are open the year round. When weather conditions necessitate the closing of park roads during freezing and thawing periods, access to park facilities is by foot only.

For further information concerning Illinois State Parks and Memorials write to the Department of Conservation, Division of Education, State Office Building, Springfield, 62706.

## U.S. GRANT'S CHRONOLOGY

1822, April 27: Hiram Ulysses Grant born at Point Pleasant, Ohio.

1839, May 29: Arrived at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. A mistake in the records changed Grant's name to Ulysses S. Grant, which he carried the rest of his life.

1846-1847: Participated in the Mexican War

1848, August 22: Married Julia Dent of St. Louis

1854, June 11: Resigned from the Army

1861-1865: The Civil War

1865, April 9: General Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia to Grant at Appomattox, Va.

1868, Nov. 3: Grant and Schuyler Colfax elected president and vice-president.

1872, Nov. 5: Grant and Henry Wilson elected president and vice-president.

1885, July 23: Grant died at Mt. McGregor, N.Y.

1902, Dec. 14: Julia Dent Grant died.



U.S. Grant and his son, Jesse.  
Chicago Historical Society.



Grant's return to Galena, August 18, 1865. The Illinois State Historical Library

